

1. Shaping of the Enlightened Bones - တွေ့ဆက်၊ ချိတ်ဆက်၊ ကွင်းဆက်

တစ်ချို့ မြန်မာလူတွေက ယုံကြည်ကြတာက - ရဟန္တာဆို ကွင်းဆက်ရှိမယ်တဲ့။ ဒီအယူအဆက ဗုဒ္ဓဘာသာစာပေတွေနှင့် ဆန့်ကျင်နေတွေ့ရပါတယ် ဗျာ။ မင်းကွန်းဆရာတော်ဘုရားကြီး ရှင်းပြတဲ့အတိုင်း "(မြတ်စွာဘုရားရှင်တို့၏) အရိုးဆက်တို့မှာ ကွင်းဆက်သာ ဖြစ်ကြကုန်၏။ ထို့ကြောင့်ပင် ထိုမြတ်စွာဘုရားတို့၏ ပကတိကိုယ်တော်အားသည် ကာဠာဝကခေါ်သော ပကကိဆင်ပြောင် ကုဋေတထောင်အား မဖျီမပုရိသ ကုဋေတသောင်းအား ပမာဏ ရှိလေသည်။" ဧရာဝတီတိုင်းမှ မြန်မာဆရာဝန်တစ်ဦးနှင့် ဒီကိစ္စကို ဆွေးနွေးကာ "တော်တော်များများ လူတွေက ဒီရဟန္တာ ဟိုရဟန္တာမှာ ကွင်းဆက်ရှိတယ် ပြောကြတယ်၊ တပည့်တော်အဲဒီ ရဟန်းရဲ့ ဓာတ်မှန် X-Ray ကြည့်လိုက်ပြီးတော့ လူအားလုံးမှာရှိတဲ့ပုံစံအတိုင်းပဲ တွေ့လိုက်ပါတယ် ဘုရား"တဲ့။ ဆရာဝန်က "ချိတ်ဆက်"သဏ္ဌာန်နှင့် နီးသောပုံကို သာမန်လူတို့၏ ဓာတ်မှန်မှာ မြင်ဖူးပါတယ်။ ကွင်းဆက်မှာတော့ မေးစရာဖြစ်သည့် "ကျောရိုးနာမ်ကြီးသည် (ဖျစ်)ကျပ်သော် ဦးနှောက်ဟာ ကိုယ်ခန္ဓာကို ဘယ်လို လှုပ်ရှားစေမလဲ (လေငန်းရောဂါမဖြစ်ပါဘူးလား)" နှင့် "ကျောရိုးဆစ်ကြားခံ ချပ်ပိုင်း (intervertebral disc) (ဖျစ်)ကျပ်သော် အလွန်းအလွန်မနာဘဲနှင့် ရှေ့ကို နောက်ကိုတောင် ခေါင်းညွတ်လို့ရပါ့မလား" စာဘယ်လောက်ဖတ်ဖတ် အဖြေ မရနိုင်သေးပါဘူး ဗျာ။

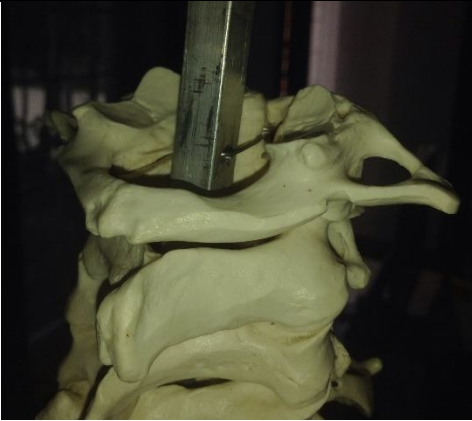
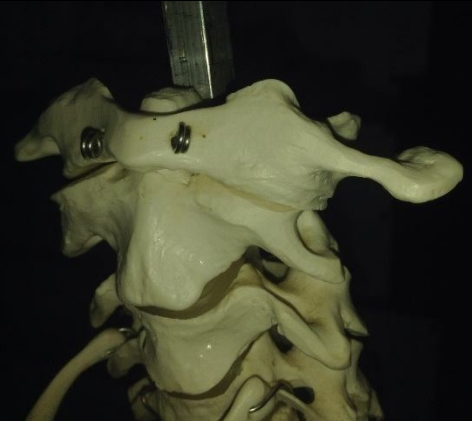

"မဟာဗုဒ္ဓဝင် ပဉ္စမတွဲ", မင်းကွန်းတိပိဋကဓမ္မဘဏ္ဍာဂါရိကဆရာတော်ဘုရားကြီး, သာသနာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန သာသနာရေးဦးစီးဌာန၊ ကမ္ဘာ့အေးစာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်, ၁၃၇၃ (၂၀၁၁), နှာ ၃၇၄-၃၇၅

"(ဤ၌ အထူးမှတ်ရန်ကား-ပကတိလူများ၏ အရိုးတို့သည် အစွန်းချင်းထိ၍ တည်ကုန်၏။(တွေ့ဆက်ဟု ဆိုလိုသည်။) ပစ္စေကဗုဒ္ဓါတို့၏ အရိုးတို့သည် ချွန်း, ချွန်းချင်းချိတ်၍ တည်သကဲ့သို့ တည်ကြကုန်၏။ (ချိတ်ဆက်ဟု ဆိုလိုသည်။) မြတ်စွာဘုရားတို့၏ အရိုးတော်တို့သည်ကား ထိုကဲ့သို့ မဟုတ်ကုန်၊ မြတ်စွာဘုရားရှင်တို့၏ အရိုးတော်တို့မှာ သံကြိုးသံခြေကျဉ်းများကဲ့သို့ အချင်းချင်း တစ်တည်း ဖွဲ့စပ်တည်နေကြကုန်၏။ (ကွင်းဆက်ဟု ဆိုလိုသည်။) လက်မောင်းလက်ရုံး ရိုးဆက်အစရှိသည့် အရိုးဆက်ကြီး ၁၂-ပါး,လက်ချောင်းခြေချောင်းအရိုးဆက်ငယ်များကို ချန်၍ ကျန်သော (မြတ်စွာဘုရားရှင်တို့၏) အရိုးဆက်တို့မှာ ကွင်းဆက်သာ ဖြစ်ကြကုန်၏။ ထို့ကြောင့်ပင် ထိုမြတ်စွာဘုရားတို့၏ ပကတိကိုယ်တော်အားသည် ကာဠာဝကခေါ်သော ပကကိဆင်ပြောင် ကုဋေတထောင်အား မဖျီမပုရိသ ကုဋေတသောင်းအား ပမာဏ ရှိလေသည်။

ထိုသို့ မြတ်စွာဘုရားရှင်တို့၏ အရိုးတော်တို့မှာ ကွင်းဆက်ကသာ များသောကြောင့် မြတ်စွာဘုရားရှင်တို့ နောက်သို့ပြန်၍ ကြည့်တော်မူလိုသောအခါ၌ လည်တိုင်တော်ချည်းသက်သက် လှည့်၍မကြည့်ရှုနိုင်၊ စင်စစ်သော်ကား ဆင်ပြောင်ကြီးသည် နောက်သို့ပြန်၍ ကြည့်လိုလတ်သော် တကိုယ်လုံးပြန်လှည့်၍ ကြည့်သကဲ့သို့ မြတ်စွာဘုရားရှင်တို့သည်လည်း ကိုယ်တော်ကိုပါ ပြန်လှည့်၍ ကြည့်ရှုတော်မူကြရလေသည်။

ဤ အရာ၌ကား ဝေသာလီပြည် တံခါးဝ၌ ရပ်တည်တော်မူ၍ ဝေသာလီပြည်ကို ကြည့်ရှုတော်မူလိုသောစိတ် မြတ်စွာဘုရားရှင်သန္တာန်တော်၌ ဖြစ်လျှင်ပင် ဤ မဟာပထဝီမြေကြီးသည် "မြတ်စွာဘုရား ... ကမ္ဘာကုဋေထောင်ပေါင်းများစွာ ပါရမီတော်တို့ကို ဖြည့်ကျင့်တော်မူခဲ့သော အရှင်မြတ်ဘုရားတို့သည် လည်တိုင်တော်ကို လှည့်၍ကြည့်ရှုရမည့်ကံကို (လူသာမန်တို့ကဲ့သို့) ပြုတော်မူခဲ့ကြသည် မဟုတ်ပါဘုရား"ဟု လျှောက်ထားပြောဆိုသည့်အလား အိုးထိန်းစက် (=အိုးလုပ်သူတို့၏ အိုးပြုလုပ်သောဘီး)ပမာ ချာချာလည်၍ မြတ်စွာဘုရားရှင်ကို ဝေသာလီပြည်ဖက်သို့ မျက်နှာတော်မူပြီးသားဖြစ်အောင် ပြုလုပ်လေသည်။ ။ထိုသို့ဖြစ်လျှင် "ဤ ယခု ဝေသာလီပြည်ကို ကြည့်ရှုတော်မူခြင်းသည် နာဂါပလောကီတ=ဆင်ပြောင်ကြီးကဲ့သို့ ကိုယ်တော်ကိုပါ လှည့်၍ ကြည့်ရှုတော်မူခြင်း အဘယ်သို့ ဖြစ်နိုင်အံ့နည်း" ဟု မေးရန် ရှိပြန်၏။ အဖြေကား-ထိုအချိန်၌ မြတ်စွာဘုရားရှင်က ဆင်ပြောင်ကြီးကဲ့သို့ ကိုယ်တော်ကိုပါ လှည့်၍ ကြည့်ရှုတော်မူလိုသည်၊ သို့သော်လည်း ကိုယ်တော်မြတ်၏ ကောင်းမှုတေဇာ် အာနုဘော်ကြောင့် ကိုယ်တော်မြတ်ရပ်တည်ရာ မဟာပထဝီ ဤ မြေကြီးက သူ့အလိုလို လည်၍ ပေးရလေသည်၊ သို့ရကား ဆင်ပြောင်ကြီးကဲ့သို့ ကိုယ်တော်ကိုပါလှည့်၍ ကြည့်ရှုတော်မူလိုသော မြတ်စွာဘုရား၏ အလိုတော်ကို အစွဲပြုကာ ဤယခု ဝေသာလီပြည်ကို ကြည့်ရှုတော်မူခြင်းကို "နာဂါပလောကီတ = ဆင်ပြောင်ကြီးကဲ့သို့ ကိုယ်တော်ကိုပါလှည့်၍ ကြည့်ရှုတော်မူခြင်း" ဟု ဟောဆိုအပ်လေသည်။"

Some Burmese people believe, that Arahants should have ring to ring (neck) bones, i.e. instead of having the first two *cervical vertebrae* made of circular bones placed one to another (and mediated by the intervertebral disc) leading the spinal cord from skull downward along the spine, they are **"joined" one to another like a chain** (unfortunately, without explanation of what happened to the spinal cord necessary for brain to control the body, and intervertebral disc necessary to avoid pain when moving with the neck). See below a photo of allegedly Buddha's ring to ring cervical vertebrae. The monastery that houses this "relic" is not at all famous, not crowded at all – and thus I dare suppose people don't believe this relic is genuine.

		
Cervical vertebrae of ordinary human (posterior view, looking from back)	Cervical vertebrae of ordinary human (anterior view, view from the front)	The way of <i>Sammā Sambuddhas</i> ¹

"The Great Chronicle of Buddhas," Volume Five, Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivamsa, [Tr. Into English – U Ko Lay, U Tin Lwin], Ti=Ni Press, Yangon, Myanmar, 1997; p.247-248 (PDF p.262-263).

"(In this matter, the statement about the Bhagava "turning around to look back" would need some comment. The Buddha's anatomy is unique among human beings. Ordinary people have bones joined up by touching at the ends (end to end). Paccekabuddhas have bones joined by hooks formed at the end of each bone (hook to hook). The Buddha's bone structure is a set or chain-links (ring to ring). With the exception or the arms consisting or twelve big joints and fingers and toes with smaller joints, all other bones are joined as chain-links. That is why the Buddha is endowed with the physical might equal to the strength of ten thousand million tuskers or that of a hundred thousand million men of ordinary strength. The bone structure being of chain-links, the Buddha's neck cannot turn back by itself alone. Therefore when the Bhagava wants to look back he has to turn back the whole body, as an elephant does. Although it was the Bhagava's intention to turn around to look back, due to the intervention of (the guardian spirit of) the great earth, that act was not actually carried out. For the great earth, as if unable to bear the sight of the Supreme Being turning around, rotated itself so that the Bhagava stood with his person facing Vesali. The great earth intervened as if it were saying, "O Great Lord, your fulfilling of the Parfections has been unique. So why should there be the need for the Bhagava to trouble himself to turn around physically just to look back as with other ordinary people?" In any case the expression that "the Bhagava turned around to look back, like a tusker" was used with reference to the Bhagava's intention to do so."

¹ I am grateful to J.R. Cruz from Chile (formerly ven. Hemacitto) for taking this photo in Htu Myat Htut Khaung Mae Lwin Taung Monastery at the foot of Kyaik Hti Yoe hill, January 2016 and donating it to me. (The other photos are taken in my room.. you know, I have a skeleton here..)

2. What is life?

The faculty of life (*jīvitindriya*) is a mental property (*cetasika*) which consists of of the "material faculty of life" (*rūpajīvitindriya*), and "mental faculty of life" (*nāmajīvitindriya*) is not a separate aggregate (*khandha*), as the now extinct Buddhist school of *Pudgalavādins* (also called *Sammītiyās*) believed. It is a force that 'protects' *nāma* & *rūpa* (like water protects lotus), and arises and passes every moment as a cause and effect of conditionality.

<i>Dhammasaṅgani-Atthakathā (Pāli)</i> ²	Translation by Pe Maung Tin ³
<i>Jīvanti tena taṃsāmpayuttakā dhammāti jīvitam.</i>	"'Life' is that by which associated states live.
<i>Anupālanalakkaṇe indaṭṭham kāretīti indriyam.</i>	It exercises government (over associated states) by the characteristic of ceaseless watching,
<i>Jīvitameva indriyam jīvitindriyam.</i>	hence it is a controlling faculty, and gives the compound 'life-faculty.'
<i>Tam pavattasantatādhipateyyam hoti.</i>	It is the dominant influence over continuity in [organic] processes.
<i>Lakkhaṇādīhi pana attanā avinibhuttānam dhammānam anupālanalakkaṇam jīvitindriyam, tesam pavattanarasam,</i>	As regards its characteristics, etc., it has the ceaseless watching over states undivided from itself as its characteristic; the processes of such states or co-existent states as function;
<i>tesameva thapanapaccupaṭṭhānam, yāpayitabbadhammapadaṭṭhānam.</i>	the placing of them as manifestation; states that have to be kept going as proximate cause.
<i>Santepi ca anupālanalakkaṇādīmi vidhāne atthikkhaṇeyeva tam te dhamme anupāleti udakam viya uppalādini,</i>	And although there is orderly arrangement in life's essential properties, etc., it watches over those states only in the moment of (their and its) existence, as water over lotuses, etc.
<i>yathāsakampaccayuppannepi ca dhamme pāleti dhātī viya kumāram,</i>	And although it watches over them, arisen as its own property, as a nurse over the infant,
<i>sayampavattitadhammasambandheneva ca pavattati niyāmakam viya,</i>	life goes on only by being bound up with these states that have gone on, as the pilot on the boat.
<i>na bhaṅgato uddham pavattayati attano ca pavattayitabbānañca abhāvā,</i>	Beyond the cessant instant it does not go on, owing to the non-being both of itself and of the states which should have been kept going.
<i>na bhaṅgakkhaṇe thapeti sayam bhijjamānattā khīyamāno viya vaṭṭisineho dīpasikham.</i>	At the cessant instant it does not maintain them, owing to its own destruction, as the spent oil in the wick cannot maintain the flame of the lamp.
<i>Na ca anupālanapavattanaṭṭhapanānubhāvavirahitam</i>	{Also, it is not exempt from watching over [during the instant of its existence] (<i>anupālana</i>), existence (<i>pavattana</i>), setting up (<i>thapana</i>) and concomitance (existence together with one another, <i>anubhāva</i>).} ⁴
<i>yathāvuttakkhaṇe tassa tassa sādhanatoti daṭṭhabbam.</i>	Its effective power is as its duration."

² *Dhammasaṅgani-Atthakathā – Kāmāvacarakusalapadabhājanīyam - Dhammuddesavāro - Indriyārāsivaṇṇanā*

³ "The Expositor (Atthasālini)", Pe Maung Tin, PTS London, 1976; p.163

⁴ I supply translation of this portion by myself, because for an unknown reason it is not contained in the book I have.

3. The Ultimate Challenge – Count Up Your Mind-Moments

Accharā = A moment, the snapping of a finger, the twinkling of an eye. I have made a little research on the various accounts of "mind-moment count" as it is depicted in various Pāli and other sources.

- (1) Mind-moment occurs several tens of billions times within a single snap of fingers –
 - a. *Mūlapaṇṇāsa-Ṭikā* – *Mahāsīhanādasuttavaṇṇanā* - *Samāsārasuddhiādivaṇṇanā* - §161 :
"Accharāsaṅghātamatte khaṇe aneka-koṭisahassa-cittapavattisambhavato."
 - b. *Sāratthadīpanī-Ṭikā* – §39 (MM2.30) "*Buddhānaṃ pana desanāvāro aññesaṃ na paññāyateva accharāsaṅghātamatte khaṇe anekakoṭisahassacittappavattisambhavato.*"
 - c. *Dhammasaṅgaṇī-Ṭikā* - *Kāmāvacarakusalapadabhājanīyavaṇṇanā* : ""*Kiñca bhiyyo accharāsaṅghātakkaṇena anekakoṭisaṅkhāya cittupattiyā pavattanato ...*"
- (2) According to Ledi Sayadaw's *Paramatthadīpanī Saṅgahamahāṭīkāpāṭha* – *Vīthi saṅgaha paramatthadīpanī* - [118] *Vibhāvanīyaṃ: Ekacittakkhaṇaṃnāmāti ekassa cittassa khaṇonāma. So pana khaṇo accharāsaṅghātakkaṇassa akkhinimilanakkhaṇassaca anekakoṭi satahassabhāgo daṭṭhabbo. Accharāsaṅghātakkaṇe anekakoṭisatasahassasaṅkhā vedanā uppajjantīti hi atthakathāyaṃ vuttaṃ.* – "One mind-moment is a moment of a single mind. It should, however, be known that they are several thousands of billions ("hundred-thousand ten-millions") (appearing) within one moment of snapping of a finger or a moment of twinkling of an eye. It is said in Commentaries⁵ that within a moment of twinkling of an eye there are arising several thousands of billions ("hundred-thousand ten-millions) feelings/sensations."
- (3) Bhikkhu Bodhi then follows Ledi Sayadaw in "*A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*", Bhikkhu Bodhi, Selangor Buddhist Vipassanā Meditation Society in association with Buddhist Publication Society, 1999 [first edition 1993]; p.156:
"The duration of material phenomena: The life-span of a citta is termed, in the Abhidhamma, a mind-moment (cittakkhaṇa). This is a temporal unit of such brief duration that, according to the commentators, in the time that it takes for lightning to flash or the eyes to blink, billions of mind-moments can elapse.;"
- (4) In "*The Complete Book of Buddha's Lists – Explained*", by David N. Snyder, Vipassana Foundation, Las Vegas, Nevada, 2009; [page has no number, but this is on the last page of the book's main text] PDF p.440 :
"500,000,000,000 – List no. 614 – The above number is 500 billion, representing the number of thought moments that may rise and perish in the blink of an eye. This is from the Abhidhamma basket of the scriptures where analysis was taken down to such a minute / sub-atomic level.;"
- (5) Mindfulness Wedge – Tricycle, by Andrew Olendzki: "every second there are over 58 800 000 000 (~ 59 billion) moments of arising&passing consciousnesses."

⁵ If the sayadaw meant the Pāli Commentaries, then I failed to find any. I mean, I don't find any source in the main scripture, Commentaries, not even in the Sub-Commentaries, which would claim that number of feelings/sensations arising within a single moment.

(6) "Satipatthāna, Bodily Feelings and SN Goenka: Theory and Practice", Michael S. Drummond, [year not mentioned]; PDF p.10:

"... Bhikkhu Bodhi, who edited Narada's English translation of the Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha, notes (p. 156) that "the life-span of a citta is termed, in the Abhidhamma, a mind-moment (cittakkhaṇa) ... according to the commentators, in the time that it takes for lightening to flash or the eyes to blink, billions of mind-moments can elapse." Although there is some tension in how the suttas and the Abhidhammamatha Saṅgaha understand the time expended for contact, psychological research has shown that it takes the mind only four milliseconds (4/1000) for it to cognize and react to an emotional stimulus (Claxton, 1997: 101). Indeed there is room for further inquiry on this matter.

The speed of the arising and falling of contact as stated by the Abhidhammamatha Saṅgaha seems somewhat exaggerated when looking at the suttas as they regularly show the Buddha discussing the soteriological danger of contact (SN.II.33) as well as stating to the monks that contact should be "fully understood" (SN.II.99), the point here being that it seems highly improbable that people could experience contacts that occur at the speeds that the Abhidhammamatha Saṅgaha suggests."

(7) "Paṭṭhāna in Daily Life – An Introduction to the Law of Conditionality", U Hla Myint, 2010

(p.17) "According to Abhidhamma, within a few seconds of thought there arise millions of mental processes, which each consists of 10 to 17 mind-moments. Referring to such individual mind-moments or thought-units, the two terms citta or viññāna (consciousness) will be used synonymously in this book."

(p.102) "In this way, the process of our thoughts is, as the Abhidhamma says, so dense and so solid that billions of mind-moments arise and pass away within a split second. It can be compared to the candle light and the current of a river. The candlelight seems to last an hour or so, but actually if we watch it carefully, we can see it being replaced every moment with a new current of fire. The same is true with a river current. "You cannot step twice into the same river" as the saying goes."

(8) "The Message in the Teachings of Kamma, Rebirth, & Saṃsāra – A Gateway to Deeper Understanding" [The Wheel Publication No. 425/427], Ashin Ottama, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 1998; p.14.

"The Commentaries go even a step further and explain human experience as a rapid sequence of mind-moments. These extremely brief moments of consciousness occur in fixed sequences, which we might regard as the "molecules" of the mind. The typical sequence consists of seventeen mind-moments, a mind-moment being an "atom" of mind. It is said that billions of mind-moments can flash by in a second."

4. Kidding! 😊

How many meditation teachers does it take to change a light bulb?

Fifty. One to actually do the work, and forty-nine to offer reflections on it.

How many jossstick Buddhists does it take to change a light bulb?

Why bother? Kwan Yin will do it for us.

How many monks does it take to change a light bulb?

They can't. There's no light bulbs in the Vinaya. [or: No way! It may be an offense!]

How many vipassana meditators does it take to change a light bulb?

No need. Just mindfully note: 'darkness, darkness, darkness'.

How many tantric adepts does it take to change a light bulb?

Two; but they have to do it in full lotus posture.

How many Nagarjunas does it take to change a light bulb?

Since there's no Nagarjuna and no light bulb, how can there be any change?

How many Buddhist scholars does it take to change a light bulb?

An internationally respected committee of academics, after deliberating all night, conclusively failed to agree on the meaning of the word 'light bulb'. Meanwhile, the sun came up.

How many Zen masters does it take to change a light bulb?

The peach blossoms fall softly on the warty old frog.

How many Ajahn Brahms does it take to change a light bulb?

The light bulb just has to get into jhana, then it'll glow by itself.

How many Abhidhamma scholars does it take to change a light bulb?

There are 20W light bulbs, 40W light bulbs, 80W light bulbs, 100W, 200W

There are 6V light bulbs, 12V light bulbs, 120V light bulbs, 240V light bulbs

There are incandescent bulbs, fluorescent bulbs

There are clear light bulbs, pearled light bulbs, colored light bulbs

There are screwing light bulbs, bayonet light bulbs

There are 20W light bulbs that are 6V, there are 20W light bulbs that are 12V, 120V, 240V

There are 40W light bulbs that are 6V, 240V, 80W, 100W, 200W

There are 20W light bulbs that are 6V incandescent

There are 200W light bulbs that are 240V, florescent, colored, and bayonet.

How many arahants does it take to change a light bulb?

One.

<http://www.tipitaka.net/pali/palidd/#B>

May all beings be happy,

monk Sarana